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ADMINISTRATOR:

Speaking At CPAC, Pruitt Says EPA Will Improve Air, Water Quality.

[Breitbart](#) (2/25, Leahy) reported that while speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt predicted air and water quality will improve over the next eight years under Trump administration policies. Pruitt said the agency under his leadership will focus on a partnership between the states and the federal government, one that “exists legally, that exist constitutionally.”

The [Daily Caller](#) (2/25, White) reported that EPA Administration Scott Pruitt also “told a crowd...that people should be angry the EPA has abused its ‘authority’ as the country’s environmental regulator,” and that he understands why people want President Trump to abolish the agency in its entirety. Pruitt also said he “intends on working within the ‘rule of law,’ not making up laws on a whim.” The [Huffington Post](#) (2/25) reported that Pruitt compared the EPA’s likability to that of the IRS.

[UPI](#) (2/25, Hays) reports that Pruitt also told reporters that the agency could begin rolling back Obama-era environmental rules as soon as next week. Although he did not specify which rules, the agency is expected to target the Clean Power Plan and Waters of the U.S. policies.

OGE Energy CEO Hopes For More Stability Under New EPA Chief. The [Oklahoman](#) (2/24) reported that OGE Energy Corp. executives and analysts Thursday discussed environmental policies under newly appointed EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt during their energy earnings call last Thursday. OGE Energy Chairman and CEO Sean Trauschke “said the utility was looking for more consistency from the agency.” Trauschke added praise for Pruitt, saying “one thing that I really appreciated about Scott was he was focused on the rule of law. ... And from my standpoint, I think just having a little more consistency so you’re not having a compounding flood of regulation on top of regulation coming at us — it’s helpful.”

Spokesperson For New Oklahoma AG Says Pruitt Used Private Email. [The Hill](#) (2/24, Cama) reported that a spokesperson in the office of Pruitt’s successor for Oklahoma attorney

general claims Pruitt used his personal email account for official business when he worked there. However, during his confirmation process in front of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Pruitt said he never used his personal email for official business. The article notes that “using a personal email address for official business does not violate Oklahoma’s laws regarding government records.”

Utah Gov. Herbert “Cautiously Optimistic” About Trump. [Politico](#) (2/24, Quigley) reports that Utah Gov. Gary Herbert, “who rescinded his endorsement of Donald Trump in October, said he is ‘cautiously optimistic’ about Trump and believes the new president is surrounding himself with a talented team.” Herbert “said he was impressed with Trump’s picks of Mike Pence for vice president, Scott Pruitt for EPA administrator, Rep. Ryan Zinke for secretary of the interior and former Gov. Rick Perry for secretary of energy.” Herbert said, “I think we see who he’s putting around him are really good, talented people who’ve been successful in life and bring a certain perspective to the table. I think is going to help.”

Additional Reading.

- ***Scott Pruitt’s First EPA Speech Gets A D+/C- From Environmental Academics.*** [Newsweek](#). (2/25, Dicamillo)
- ***Emails Expose EPA Chief Scott Pruitt’s Ties To Oil And Gas Companies.*** [International Business Times](#). (2/24)

BROWNFIELDS/SUPERFUND/OTHER CLEANUPS:

EPA Extends Coal Mine Cleanup Rule Public Comment Period. The [AP](#) (2/25, Brown) reported the Environmental Protection Agency “has delayed consideration of a proposal to require companies to prove they have the financial wherewithal to clean up polluted mining sites” for four months to gather additional public commentary. EPA Administrator Pruitt explained, “By extending this comment period, we are demonstrating that we are listening to miners, owners and operators all across America and to all parties interested in this important rule.” The agency said it still intends “to meet the court-ordered” December 2017 deadline to finalize the rule.

Local TV Coverage: Mine Pollution

Cleanup. [KZJO-TV](#) Seattle (2/25, 10:03 a.m. EST) reported, “The Environmental Protection Agency has delayed a proposal that would require mining companies to show they can pay for pollution cleanup so taxpayers are not stuck with the bill. From 2010 to 2014 the EPA spent more than a billion dollars on clean up of work at sites across the US. In the past some companies have avoided cleanup by declaring they will allow for public longer comment period on this issue.”

MT: Residents Accuse EPA Of Botched Arsenic Clean-Up. The [AP](#) (2/24, Volz) reported Montana landowners are accusing the federal government of botching the environmental cleanup of the Anaconda smelter. They claim the EPA’s determination of safe arsenic levels in their soil is “arbitrary,” and worry it is unsafe. The residents are suing Atlantic Richfield, the company that owned the smelter, to pay for “the removal and replacement of all their soil to a depth of 2 feet, and permeable barriers installed underground to keep arsenic in the shallow groundwater from flowing onto their property.”

Additional Reading.

- **DEC Hearing Reviews Schenectady Superfund Site.** [Albany \(NY\) Times Union](#). (2/25)
- **LeBrun: Hoosick Falls PFOA Settlement Choice Reaches Beyond Small Community.** [Albany \(NY\) Times Union](#). (2/25, LeBrun)

ENERGY:

Nevada Senator, Energy Groups Worry About Pruitt’s Impact On Clean Energy. The [Las Vegas Sun](#) (2/24, Akers) reported Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez Masto and local clean energy advocates worry that the Environmental Protection Agency under Scott Pruitt may negatively impact the state’s “clean energy future.” Cortez Masto called on the groups to “push back and use all voices,” and noted that the state may have to move forward on renewable energy without federal support.

Experts Discuss Pros And Cons Of 100% Renewable Energy Commitment For Massachusetts. The [Boston Globe](#)

(2/24, Laidler) provided arguments for and against Massachusetts’ committing to 100% renewable energy in the future. State Rep. Sean Garballey argues that scientific consensus on global warming and new technologies should spur the state to set a “goal of deriving all energy from renewable sources by 2050.” He suggests the target “would spur job creation, protect our natural resources, and reduce our carbon footprint.” Beacon Hill Institute president David G. Tuerck warns that pushing for 100% renewable energy would “sacrifice the interests of Massachusetts residents to...the questionable idea of man-made global warming.” He believes it is an unattainable goal, and cites research suggesting that a smaller reduction in emissions would be equally effective at fighting climate change.

WSJournal: Carbon Tax Would Be A Disaster For Trump. In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/24) argued against a carbon tax, suggesting it would hurt the economy and provide little environmental benefit. The Journal claimed that the tax would be better than regulation or a cap-and-trade system, but would have to be offset by lower taxes overall that are not likely to happen. The editorial concludes that passing such a tax would be a disaster for the Trump Administration, and urges Trump to look elsewhere to lower emissions.

MIT Research VP Discusses Targeting Coal Emissions Without Hurting Coal Communities. In a [Washington Post](#) (2/24, Zuber) op-ed, Massachusetts Institute of Technology vice president for research and Chair of the National Science Board Maria T. Zuber argued that “the move to clean energy is imperative,” but suggested that it can be done without hurting coal communities. Zuber outlined several suggestions for reducing the impact of coal as an energy source, including researching “carbon capture and storage technology” and finding “new ways to make coal useful” in other industries. She also calls for a commitment “to helping the workers and communities that are hurt when coal mines and coal plants reduce their operations or shut down.”

ClearPath CEO Criticizes LCV Scorecard Of Republicans. The “Morning Energy” blog of [Politico](#) (2/24) reported “ClearPath Action CEO Jay Faison said the League of

Conservation Voters annual scorecard unfairly excluded votes on Republican-led proposals bolstering advanced nuclear power, clean coal technologies and hydropower to artificially tamp down” the scores of Republican lawmakers. In a statement Faison said, “The cherry picking is clearly designed to produce starkly partisan results, reflecting a bias against many of the most effective clean energy strategies available to pragmatic policymakers.”

Consultant: To Create Jobs, US Should Back Wind Energy, Curb Regulations On Bioproducts. Energy industry consultant Denise Bode writes for [The Hill](#) (2/25) in its “Pundits Blog” that “phenomenal growth” in US wind turbine manufacturing has been driven by the need to manufacture major components close to installation sites. More than 500 factories build wind-related parts in 43 states, supporting more than 25,000 manufacturing employees while more than 100,000 Americans work in wind energy across all states. Biomanufacturing US corn into renewable bioproducts ranging from personal care, coatings, adhesives, biochemicals and plastics account for more than 77,000 jobs nationally, paying more than \$80,000 per year on average. Bode argues that rolling back regulations and taxes will drive more job growth. Bode urges the EPA to drop permitting requirements for bioproduct manufacturers “because the carbon being released from processing crops is simply carbon that was captured when the crops grew earlier in the year.”

Coal Industry Voices Concern About Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The [New York Times](#) (2/26, Krauss) reports that the nation’s three largest coal producers, Cloud Peak Energy, Peabody Energy, and Arch Coal, in a bid to “shore up their struggling industry” are “voicing greater concern about greenhouse gas emissions.” In an effort to “frame a new image for coal as a contributor, not an obstacle, to a clean-energy future,” executives from the companies “are going so far as to make common cause with some of their harshest critics, including the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Clean Air Task Force,” and “lobbying for a tax bill to expand government subsidies to reduce the environmental impact of coal burning.”

Scholar Discusses Targeting Coal Emissions Without Hurting Coal Communities.

In a [Washington Post](#) (2/24, Zuber) op-ed, Massachusetts Institute of Technology vice president for research and Chair of the National Science Board Maria T. Zuber argues that “the move to clean energy is imperative,” but suggests that it can be done without hurting coal communities. Zuber outlines several suggestions for reducing the impact of coal as an energy source, including researching “carbon capture and storage technology” and finding “new ways to make coal useful” in other industries. She also calls for a commitment “to helping the workers and communities that are hurt when coal mines and coal plants reduce their operations or shut down.”

Minnesota City To Seek Public Input On Emission Reduction Plan. The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (2/25, Van Berkel) reported St. Paul “is launching an effort to come up with a Climate Action Plan that provides a feasible path to reduce” greenhouse gas emissions. The city’s “goal is to be carbon neutral by 2050,” but officials will seek residents’ input on ways to reduce emissions “over the next few months” in a series of public meetings on a variety of topics.

ENFORCEMENT:

Local TV Coverage: Salmon Preservation Lawsuit. [KOMO-TV](#) Seattle (2/24, 9:16 a.m. EST) reported, “A new effort to save the northwest salmon, environmental and fishing groups will take the government to court. A lawsuit filed in Seattle calls on the EPA to create temperature limits on the Columbia River system. The suit says giant dams warm the water in the summer, which poses a threat to the salmon and steelhead.”

OTHER NEWS:

Spicer Says Questions About Paris Climate Deal Should Go To Tillerson. The “Morning Energy” blog of [Politico](#) (2/24) reported White House press secretary Sean Spicer deferred on a question about the Paris climate deal. When asked about the deal, Spicer said, “I will leave that to Secretary [Rex] Tillerson.”

That's a conversation that he's having with him as far as where we are on that."

RULES/REGULATIONS/POLICY

:

Trump To Roll Back High-Profile Obama Environmental Regulations.

The Wall Street Journal (2/24, Harder) reported President Trump will sign two executive orders repealing a water regulation and a rule cutting carbon emissions from power plants. The first may be signed as early as Monday, as part of Trump's attempt to roll back the previous administration's high-profile environmental regulations.

Pruitt Says EPA Will Roll Back Obama-Era Regulations. Bloomberg News (2/25, Dlouhy) reported EPA Administrator Pruitt "unveiled plans to roll back at least three Obama-era rules at the EPA while vowing to give businesses 'regulatory certainty.'" at the Conservative Political Action Conference on Saturday. Pruitt accused the previous administration of being too "focused on climate change" at the cost of "other priorities." The Hill (2/25, Greenwood) said "Pruitt blamed the Obama administration for failing to tackle more state-based environmental issues, such as a decades-old water quality issues in Oregon tied to a nuclear facility in Washington." He added that "some regulations that in the near term need to be rolled back in a very aggressive way." He added, "I think maybe next week, you may be hearing about some of those."

WPost: Trump Must Have Alternative In Place Before Repealing Obama-Era Environmental Rules. In an editorial, the Washington Post (2/25) argued that "Republicans must have a believable alternative plan ready that would reduce emissions as much or more than current regulations would" if they plan to repeal Obama-era environmental rules. The Post warned that Trump's rush to fight regulations could hurt "accelerating global efforts to fight emissions collectively." Some conservatives have proposed replacing "EPA climate rules with a substantial carbon tax," the Post explained, adding, "This is what conservative governing looks like. What do Mr. Trump and the rest of his party want to do?"

California Democrats Introduce Measures To Protect Obama-Era

Environmental Policy. According to Reuters (2/23, Carroll), Democratic state senators in California introduced the "Preserve California" package of bills Thursday that would ensure future federal policies do not "encroach on our far-reaching progressive [environmental] policies," said state Senate Leader Kevin de León in a press conference. The measures will make existing Obama-era federal regulations on clean air, water, and endangered species enforceable by state law and prevent the sale of federal lands to oil companies. E&E Publishing (2/23) reports that De León cited the newly appointed EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt, as motivation for his bill.

NC Withdraws From CPP Lawsuit. The "Morning Energy" blog of Politico (2/24) reported North Carolina "has withdrawn itself from the Clean Power Plan lawsuits still pending before the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, a consequence of Democrat Roy Cooper's win." Cooper, as attorney general, "declined to sue EPA over the climate rule, so Republican Gov. Pat McCrory sued via the state Department of Environmental Quality." Cooper is now governor and "he has the power to withdraw DEQ from the suit." Politico added that "26 states are still party to the action, along with the myriad businesses and trade groups."

Sierra Club Threatens To Sue EPA Over Lack Of RFS Program Analyses.

The "Morning Energy" blog of Politico (2/24) reported the Sierra Club threatening to sue the EPA "over what it said was a failure to produce legally required analyses of the air and environmental impacts of the Renewable Fuel Standard program." In a statement staff attorney Devorah Ancel said, "It is unlawful for the EPA to so blatantly disregard its own rules and mandates when it comes to protecting our communities and environment." The agency "hasn't filed an air impact analysis in three years or an environmental impact in six years, the group said."

Fuel Station Industry Insider: Changing RFS Will Hurt Consumers, Increase Gas Prices. In an op-ed in The Hill (2/24, Rawers, Contributor), Director of Fuel Procurement at Chronister Oil Company Bryce Rawers warned against refiners' push to change the Renewable Fuel Standard rules. Rawers claims the RFS "has lowered the cost of gasoline and diesel, supported domestic agricultural products, improved air quality by reducing emissions, and reduced our

nation's reliance on foreign oil." He argued that changing the rules would "discourage the use of renewable fuel and punish the companies that have played by the rules over the last decade," and increase gasoline prices for consumers, and calls on EPA Administrator Pruitt to "preserve the RFS and ensure it continues to work as intended."

Safety Advocates Frustrated With GOP Proposal To Rescind Chemical Facility Bill. [Bloomberg BNA](#) (2/24, Pearson)

reported that Republicans have proposed a bill that would "undo years of work by the Environmental Protection Agency on a plan to more closely track and monitor high-risk chemical facilities." Key Democrats are "silent so far," although they are expected to put forth an active opposition against the resolution if Republicans move for a vote. Moreover, "frustrated safety advocates" say that "taking up the resolution to block what they characterize as modest new rules could waste floor time better suited for other issues and burn bridges with lawmakers whose support will be needed for major legislation like infrastructure or tax reform."

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE:

Additional Reading.

- ***Snyder Advisor Believes \$20M In Past Flint Water Loans Will Be Forgiven.*** [MLive \(MI\)](#). (2/24)
- ***Arsenic Levels Double Safe Limit In Warner Springs School Water.*** [KNSD-TV](#). San Diego (2/27)

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